

MONROE COUNTY NEWS RELEASE

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ICE STORM REMINDERS: POWER RESTORATION SAFETY TIPS/ CONTRACTOR DEBRIS DISPOSAL INFORMATION

Monroe County Executive Jack Doyle today urged residents who are returning to their homes after power has been restored from the ice storm to be mindful of the following safety tips:

- Food in the refrigerator is good for only six to eight hours after the loss of power. Residents should dispose of food that has been left in a powerless refrigerator for longer than that period. Food in the freezer is typically safe for 24-48 hours after the loss of power.
- Do not take lanterns, lighters or other flames into your home until you have determined that it is free of leaking gas that could become ignited.
- Check thoroughly for gas leaks – If you smell gas take the following steps: (1) Leave immediately. (2) Call 911 from another location.
- If any of your appliances are wet: (1) Turn off the main power switch for the house. (2) Unplug the wet appliances. (3) Dry them out. (4) Reconnect the dry appliances. (5) Turn on the main power switch. ***Don't do any of this while standing in water.***
- Once settled, call relatives and inform them that you are safe.
- Be aware of weakened trees and power lines when working outside your home.

Residents without power continue to be urged to use alternative heating sources **only** in well-ventilated areas. Also, people should check the batteries in their smoke detectors and their battery-powered carbon monoxide detectors.

Doyle also announced that similar to the 1998 Wind Storm, Monroe County is not charging private contractors to dispose of debris at County dumpsites. People contracting with vendors for debris clean up/removal should not be charged for the cost of disposal if debris is hauled to a County site. Charges may be incurred for hauling to the disposal site, but not for dumping. People are encouraged to ask vendors where debris is being taken to avoid additional costs.

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Additionally, Doyle again provided tips on how residents can protect themselves from price gouging by irresponsible contractors:

- Check the Firm's Reputation: Information is available through the Better Business Bureau at 1-800-828-5000 or online at www.upstateny.bbb.org.
- Ask the Contractor for Proof of Insurance: If the contractor is not insured, you may be liable for accidents on your property.
- Ask for References, a Written Estimate and a Signed Contract
- Don't Sign Completion Papers or Make a Final Payment Until Work is Completed.

While no incidents of gouging have been reported so far, Doyle urged residents encountering such behavior to contact the State Attorney General's Office at 1-800-771-7755.

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